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THE MONSTER WHO ATE DARKNESS

JOYCE DUNBAR ILLUSTRATED BY JIMMY LIAO

\$16.99 U.S
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There's a monster under
Jo-Jo's bed, and it's
hungry. What does it
like to eat? The darkness
all around. With every bite,
the monster grows bigger
and **bigger** and
bigger. . . .

THE
MONSTER
WHO ATE
DARKNESS

JOYCE DUNBAR

illustrated by JIMMY LIAO



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Jo-Jo couldn't sleep.

He didn't like the darkness
under the bed.

He thought a monster might
be hiding there.





Well,
this time . . .
there WAS!

A tiny speck of a monster,
so small he could hardly be seen.

But he had a big empty feeling inside him
that made him hungry—very **HUNGRY!**



He nibbled at a woolly slipper
under the bed.

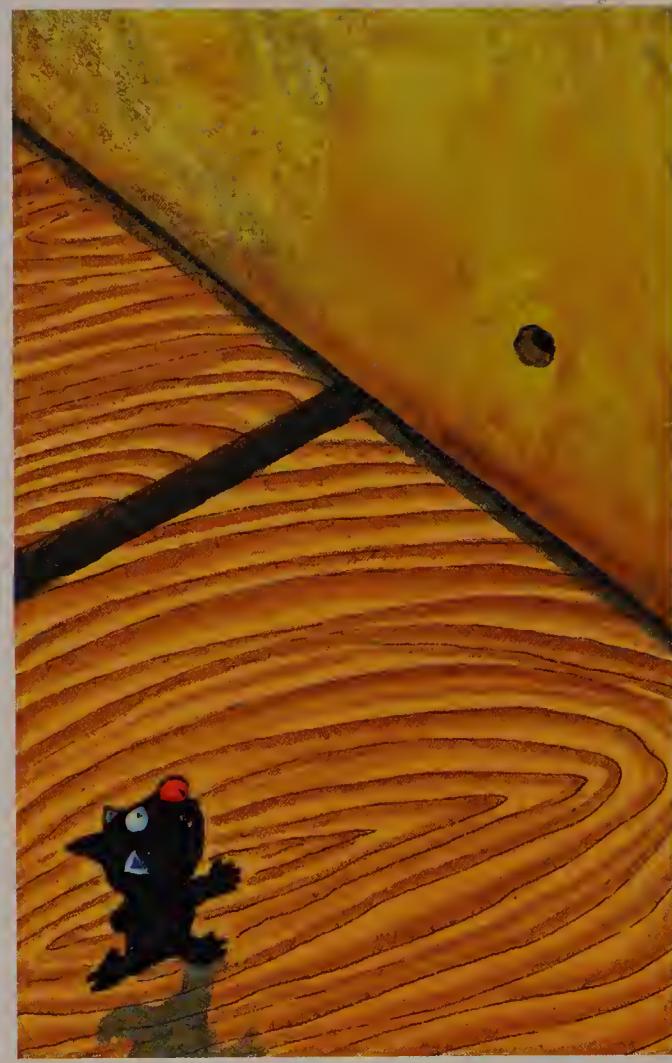
Ugh! Horrible!



He bit into a tin toy car.

Ouch!

It hurt his gums.



Then he saw
something interesting.

It was a box.



He sucked the darkness out of the box – every last bit.



Delicious!



The monster was
a teeny bit bigger.
And he was
still hungry.



He looked around for
something else to eat.



There was a lot more darkness under the bed.
The monster ate all of it.
He licked into the darkest corners
until there wasn't any left.



The monster got quite a lot bigger.
But he was still hungry.
So he ate all the darkness in the closet and all
the darkness hiding behind the folds in the curtains.



The monster
got bigger
and **bigger**.



But he was still hungry.
So he slipped out
of Jo-Jo's house . . .

and went looking in all the other houses
for more darkness to eat.



He found darkness in cellars.



And attics.



And chimneys.

He ate it all up.
He licked them
quite clean.



He found new and exciting ways to eat darkness.

He liked darkness spread on burned toast.

He liked darkness sandwiches.



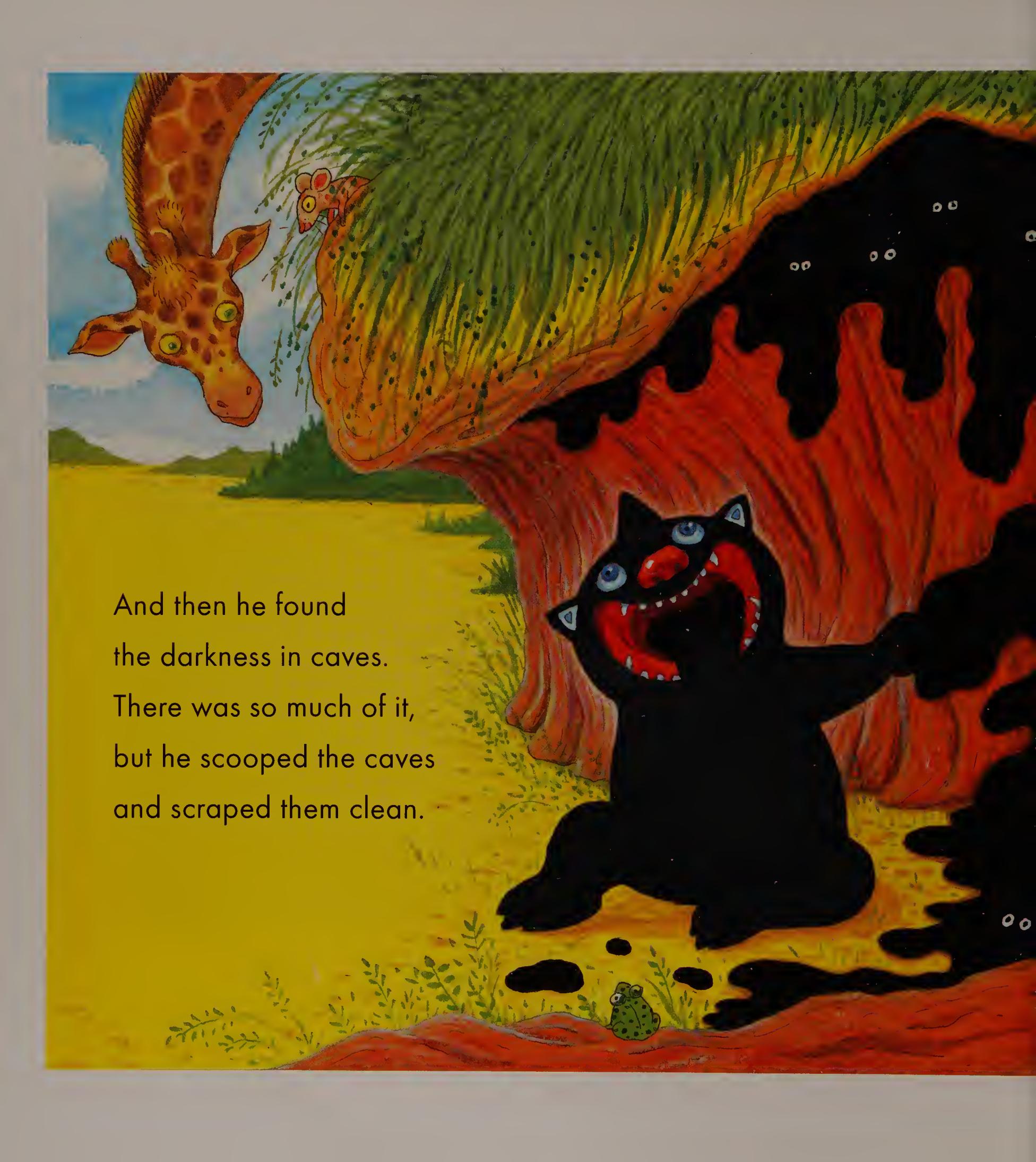
He especially liked darkness soup, which he made out of the darkness at the bottom of wells. And darkness stew, which he made out of the darkness in ditches.



Then he found rabbit holes—
he ate all the darkness there . . .



and foxholes—
a real delicacy.



And then he found
the darkness in caves.
There was so much of it,
but he scooped the caves
and scraped them clean.

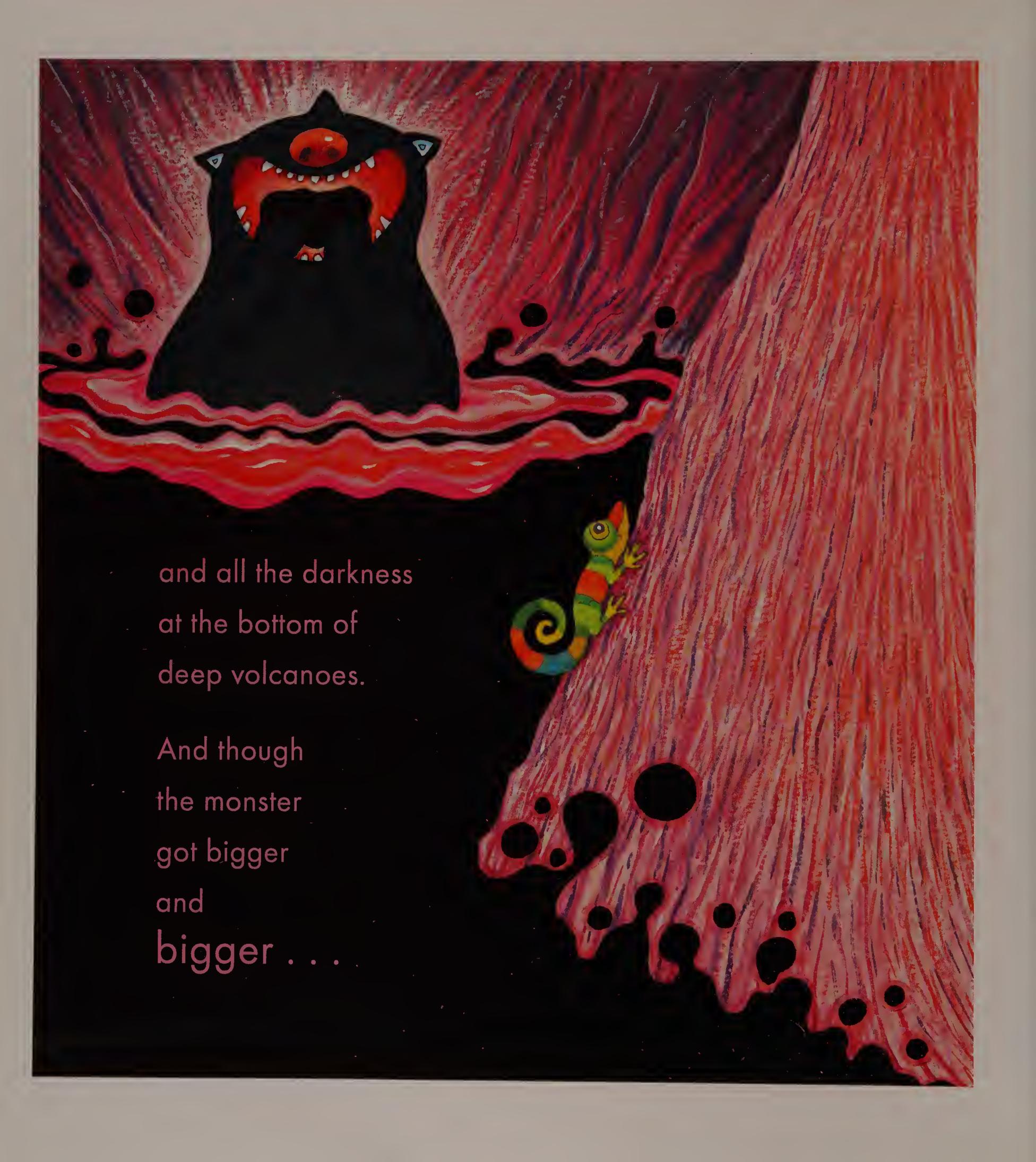




But he was
STILL HUNGRY.

So he ate all the darkness
he could find in the
darkest forests . . .

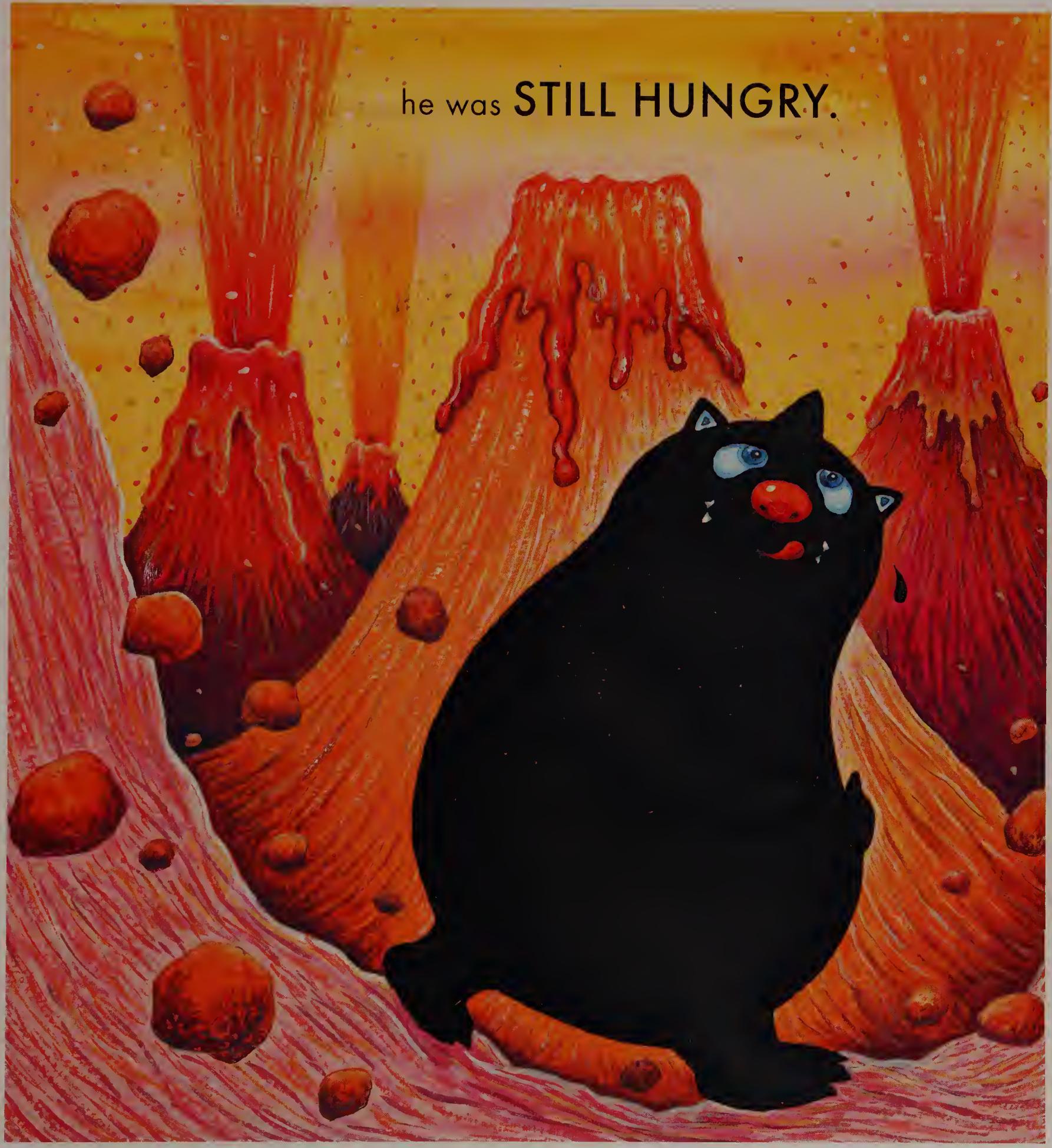




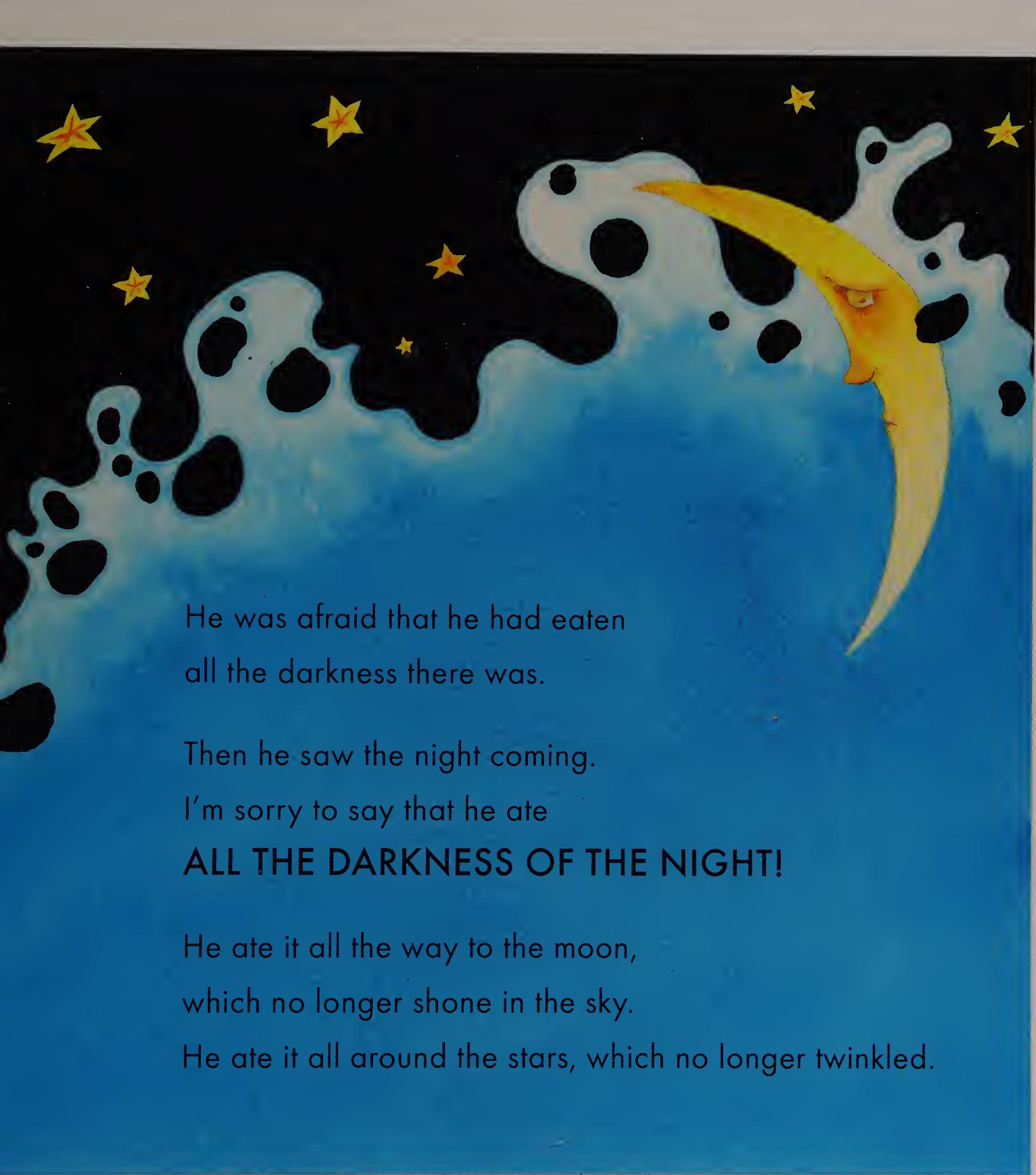
and all the darkness
at the bottom of
deep volcanoes.

And though
the monster
got bigger
and
bigger . . .

he was **STILL HUNGRY.**



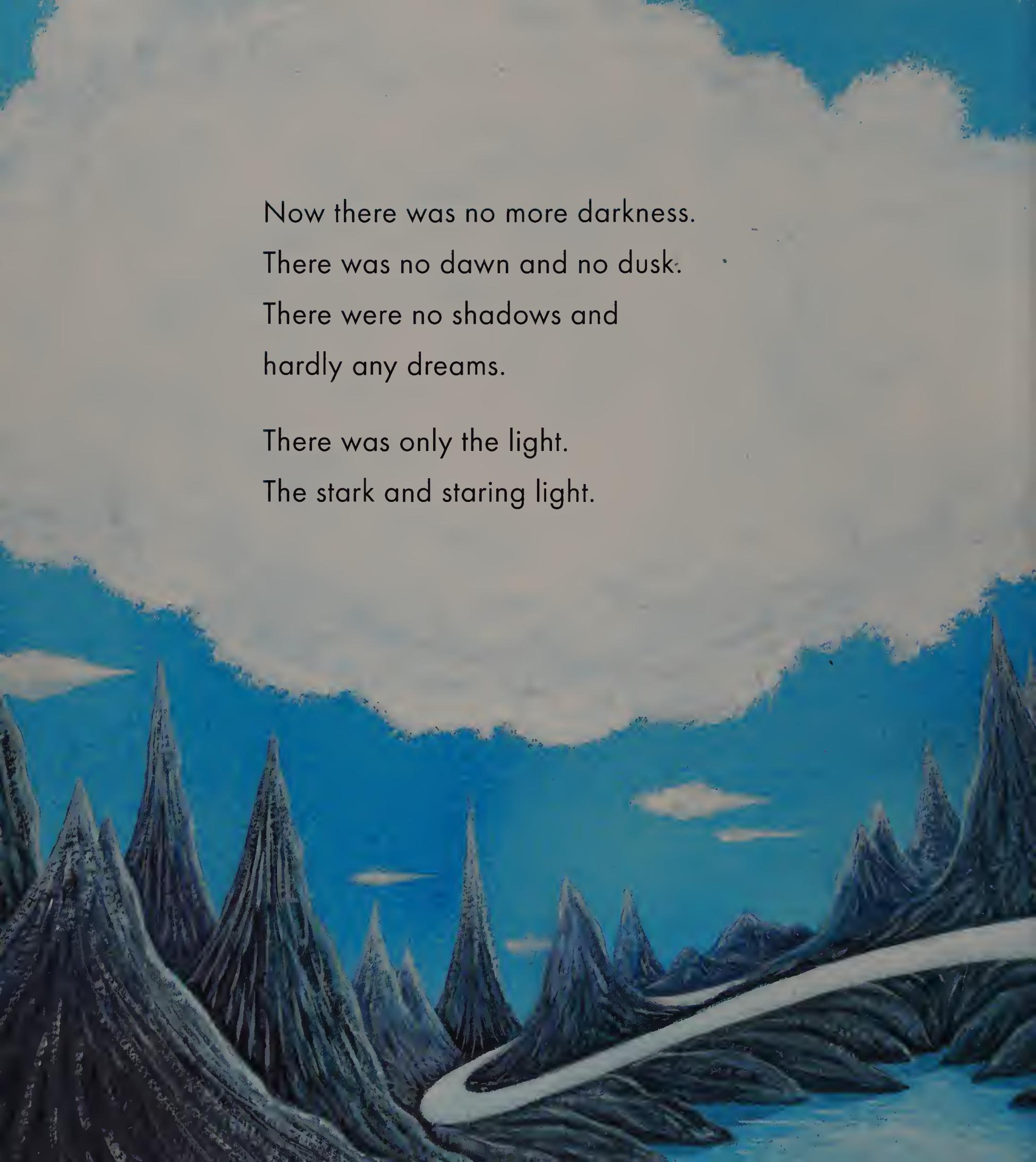




He was afraid that he had eaten
all the darkness there was.

Then he saw the night coming.
I'm sorry to say that he ate
ALL THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT!

He ate it all the way to the moon,
which no longer shone in the sky.
He ate it all around the stars, which no longer twinkled.

The background of the image is a landscape featuring jagged, dark, spiky mountains. The sky above is bright and overexposed, appearing almost white or light blue. A few small, wispy clouds are visible in the upper right quadrant. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and somewhat foreboding.

Now there was no more darkness.

There was no dawn and no dusk.

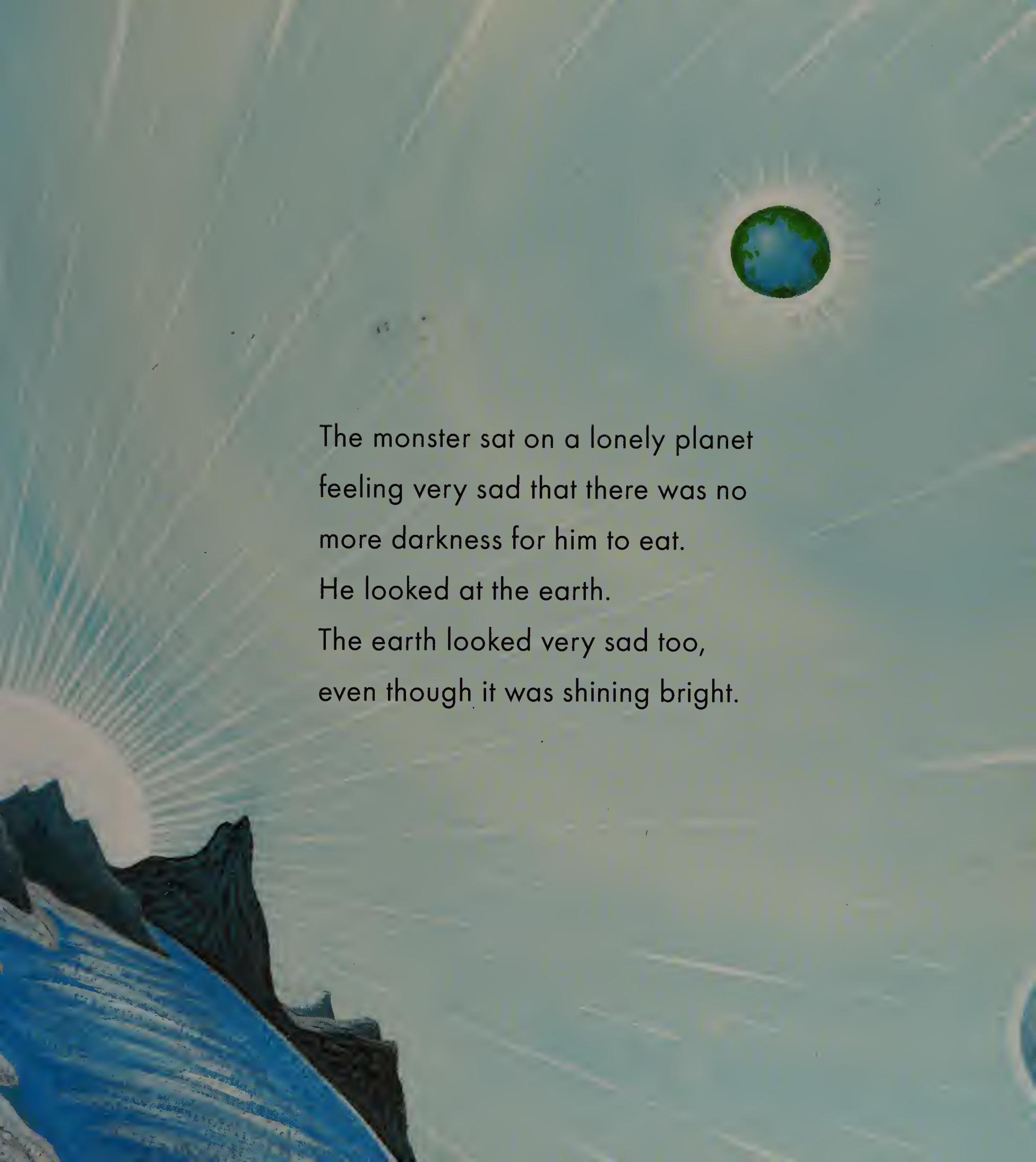
There were no shadows and
hardly any dreams.

There was only the light.

The stark and staring light.







The monster sat on a lonely planet
feeling very sad that there was no
more darkness for him to eat.
He looked at the earth.
The earth looked very sad too,
even though it was shining bright.



You see,
without the dark,
the owls didn't wake
up at night. They slept
so long and so soundly that
they kept falling from
the treetops.



Fireflies didn't bother
to go out, because
they couldn't be seen.
Cats' eyes no longer
shone, so the cats
lost a lot of
their glamour.



Hedgehogs went stumbling about blindly in the night light and kept bumping into each other.

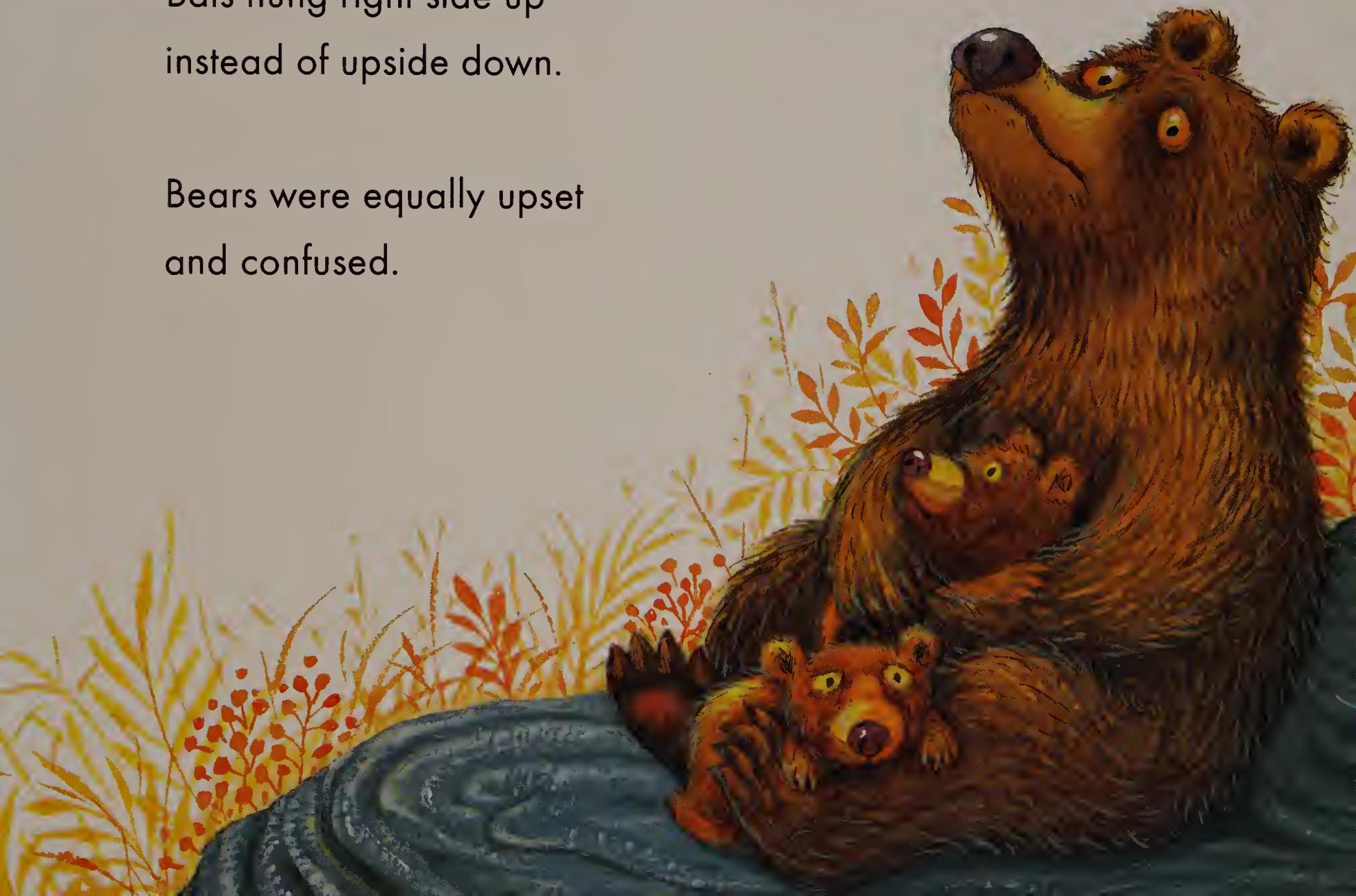


Foxes crashed into boulders.



Bats hung right side up
instead of upside down.

Bears were equally upset
and confused.





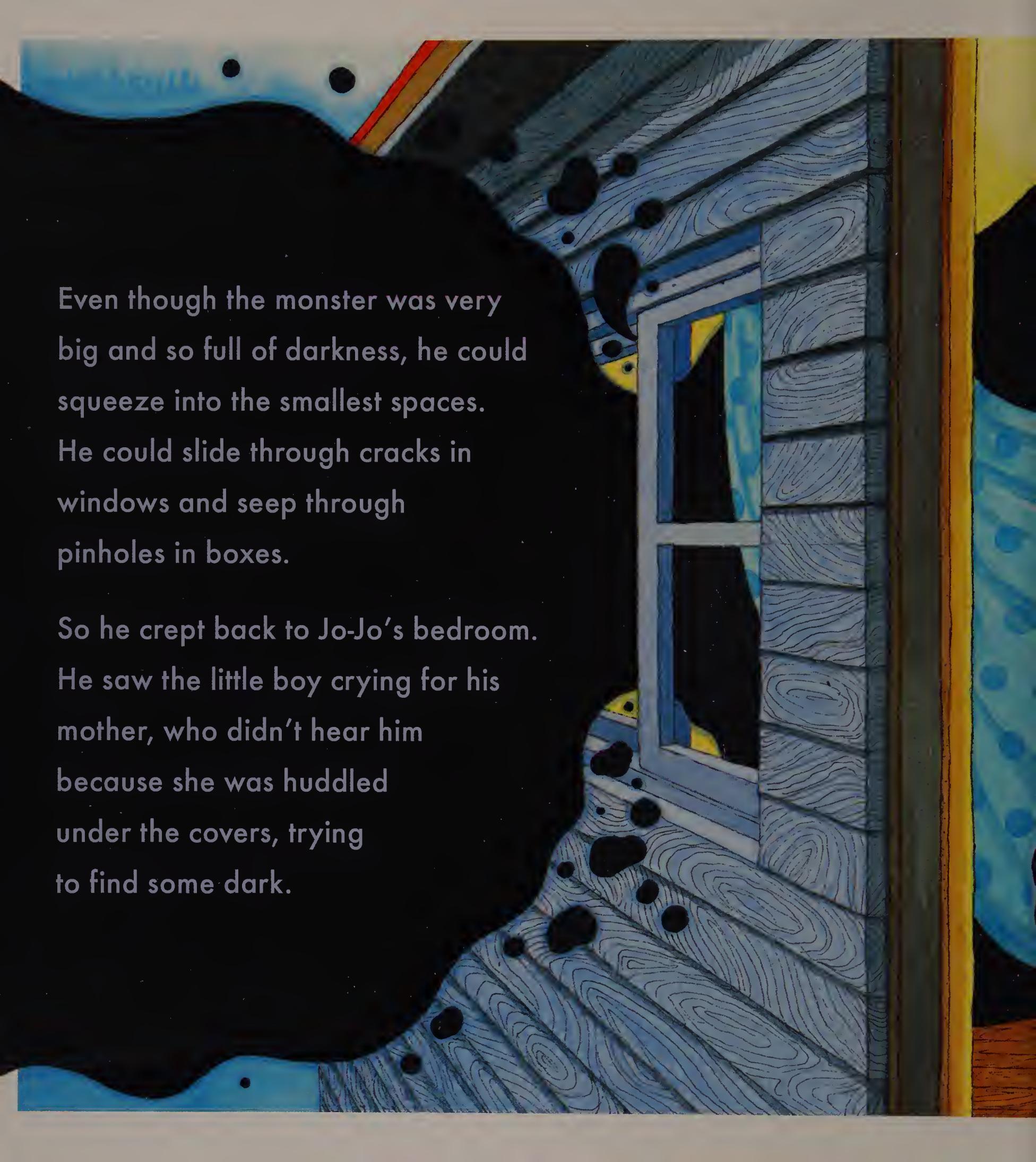




Then the monster heard,
from far away, a strange sound.
It was a little boy named Jo-Jo, crying.
He was crying because he couldn't get to sleep.
Why couldn't he get to sleep?
Because there was too much light.

WAAAawawawadadda





Even though the monster was very
big and so full of darkness, he could
squeeze into the smallest spaces.

He could slide through cracks in
windows and seep through
pinholes in boxes.

So he crept back to Jo-Jo's bedroom.

He saw the little boy crying for his
mother, who didn't hear him
because she was huddled
under the covers, trying
to find some dark.



Then the monster did something amazing.







He picked up the little boy in his great, dark
arms, which were very soft and not a bit hairy,



and he rocked him as if he were in
a cradle. And he hummed a darkness lullaby.



Soon Jo-Jo was asleep. So was the monster.
He wasn't hungry anymore.
He just didn't have that big empty feeling inside him.



Instead, he snored and snoozed
with the little boy safe in his arms.



And as he snoozed,
all the darkness oozed out of him.

It went right back to where it belonged.
It oozed and it oozed until the monster
was no more than a tiny speck again.





A small, happy speck,



fast asleep in the arms of a boy!

J PICTURE DUNBAR
Dunbar, Joyce.
The monster who ate
darkness /
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JOYCE DUNBAR is the author of more than seventy books for children, including *Shoe Baby*, illustrated by Polly Dunbar, about which *Kirkus* said in a starred review, "delightful mixed-media collage illustrations of eccentric creatures great and small burst forth with as much glee as the text in this contagiously exuberant mother-daughter collaboration." Joyce Dunbar lives in Norwich, England.

JIMMY LIAO is one of Asia's most celebrated illustrators. His beguiling picture books, usually created for adults, have sold over five million copies worldwide. While illustrating *The Monster Who Ate Darkness*, Jimmy was fascinated by the character of the monster. "He is like a child," he says. "He does whatever he wants." Jimmy Liao lives in Taiwan.

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